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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 001611

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - International Justice -
Milosevic Iran and Nuclear Proliferation Human Rights
Commission
PARIS -Tuesday, March 14, 2006

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

International Justice - Milosevic
Iran and Nuclear Proliferation
Human Rights Commission

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

The major international story continues to be Milosevic's death, its consequences for the Balkans and the utility of trials on crimes against humanity. Several editorials comment on the "Butcher of the Balkans" with one regional editorial saying "Milosevic is turning out to be more cumbersome dead than alive." (See Part C)

The possibility of a mistrial in the Moussaoui case is front paged in Le Figaro: "Moussaoui Could Escape Death Penalty." The possible violation of the rule about witnesses was widely reported on the electronic media. An article in Le Figaro reports how French pressure was instrumental in keeping Moussaoui in the civilian justice system rather than ending up in Guantanamo. Separately, Le Monde devotes two pages to Guantanamo: "After an intense legal battle, the American press agency Associated Press was able to force the Pentagon to release the contents of thousands of pages of interrogations of 'enemy combatants'. The documents describe some outlandish situations of prisoners being held on the flimsiest of pretexts." An accompanying article looks at "typical" treatment of a detainee: "he's told he'll be held indefinitely, unless he cooperates; he is forced to listen to loud music; he is kept awake for hours on end, etc." An ad for a "rolling restraint chair" is also highlighted, showing how detainees can be strapped in, and emphasizing how the chair limits staff's "liability."

Le Figaro reports that "Iran is planning a second nuclear plant. "The announcement," comments Delphine Minoui, "sounds like a new challenge to the West." In Catholic La Croix an op-ed pleads in favor "of getting rid of nuclear proliferation." (See Part C) A short item in Le Figaro notes that "for the first time, President Bush has accused Iran of directly fomenting rebellion in Iraq."

La Croix reports on the creation of the UN Council on Human Rights, to replace the UNHR Commission, which has been suspended. (See Part C) It also interviews Kenneth Roth of Human Rights Watch, who "believes in the Council and calls on the U.S. to support it."

An OECD report on European systems of education is very critical of France's system, reports France Soir. "Our National Education is outdated, its practitioners work in complete isolation. the French system suffers from a lack of coherence and an immense gap between the world of education and reality."

Most editorials are devoted to PM Villepin, his battle for the CPE, his youth employment plan and the student movement, which appears to be gaining momentum. Says editorialist Herve Fravre in regional La Voix du Nord: "Villepin's speech in favor of the CPE Sunday evening on television was seen by many, but heard by very few, if one is to go by the general assemblies held in our universities on Monday. This is no surprise, considering that he did not answer the key questions put to him." Most reports indicate that President Chirac may speak up in favor of his Prime Minister during his visit to Germany.

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

International Justice - Milosevic

"The Limitations of International Justice"
Yves Threard in right-of-center Le Figaro (03/14): "Milosevic's trial was to serve as an example, despite its imperfections. Everything was going along according to the rules. While the former butcher of Belgrade was on trial, several other tyrants

under scrutiny managed to evade justice: Hissene Habre, Charles Taylor, Augusto Pinochet. And of course there is Saddam Hussein. But his trial in Baghdad does not offer every possible guarantee of impartiality. Especially since the outcome, the death penalty, is already a given. Experience shows that universal justice is selective, somewhat like the right to intervene of the '90s. It is easier to file suit against an African leader than against a leader from China, known for its little respect for human rights and its great firepower in diplomatic relations. Universal justice will always come up against national interests and sovereignty. For this reason, and in these times of Guantanamo and torture at Abu Ghraib, the U.S. has been a staunch adversary of the International Crimes Court. While universal justice will never rid the world of barbarity, and will remain in the hands of the victors, it remains a form of progress that must be offered to all those who suffer from the arbitrary."

"After Milosevic"

Left-of-center Le Monde in its editorial (03/14): "The guilt of the 'butcher of the Balkans' may never be legally proven. This is regrettable, as is the fact that his trial lasted so long. But we must not forget that international justice, if it wants to merit its name, has to offer every guarantee to the accused. who in this case made use of every possible artifice to prolong and delay the outcome. But with or without a final judgment, Milosevic's responsibility is undeniable."

Iran

"Getting Rid of the Nuclear, Completely"

Bertrand Badie of the Institute for Political Studies in Catholic La Croix (03/14): "The system at hand, where deviance pays better than respecting a hypothetical international norm, as illustrated with India, Iran and North Korea, is proof of its own absurdity. An absurdity which is at once dangerous and cruel because it turns transgression into a clever means of consolidating one's position. It could even lead medium powers to rethink their policies of abstention. Especially since the international community's ability in terms of sanctions with regard to Iran, is one more example of its myopia. In our context of global trade and shortage of energy, wanting to punish a nation, which is a major oil producer, is a dangerous adventure. Worse even: such diplomacy weakens multipolarity. This therapeutic and diplomatic persistence in trying to save a system of proliferation which is full of holes and dates back to a world which is now obsolete, and the complete lack of imagination and will in rethinking how to protect the world against the new and numerous dangers presented by nuclear weapons is putting the world at great risk. In this day and age when the Middle East is at the crossroads of every danger, it would be more equitable and more rational to think about ridding the world of the nuclear."

Human Rights Commission

"UN Hopes for a Human Rights Council"

Francois d'Alancon in Catholic La Croix (03/14): "The U.S. opposes the text for the UN Human Rights Council as it stands now, although it has the support of a large majority of nations. Of late, the Commission came under fire because countries such as China and Libya were part of it. For quite some time, the Commission served as a fighting arena for countries that did not see eye to eye, such as the U.S. and Cuba. which used anti-American feelings to recruit the support of countries such as Pakistan and Sudan. As a result, the Commission became the theatre of propaganda to the detriment of effective work." STAPLETON